

April 4, 1961

TO: Arthur Schlesinger, jr.

FROM: William S. Barnes and John N. Plank

SUBJECT: Cuba (Supplement)

This paper has been discussed with persons close to the leadership of the Revolutionary Council. Their reactions and amendments to it are as follows:

1. General

The effects of this program upon "traditional" Cuban patterns are not explicitly spelled out. They suggest "bringing antiquated traditions up to date" or that "there is need for new traditions that correspond to a new social structure". For example, local autonomy in educational matters, or political responsibility to the local electorate have not been traditionally characteristic of Cuban society.

They believe that more attention should be paid to the difficulties of changing rooted traditions. What is proposed here should be explained as requiring radical action, and not formalistic, mechanistic change.

2. Specific

(a) They believe that the phasing of such proposals as those relating to economic development, elections at various levels, and educational reform should be more carefully spelled out.

They believe that some reference should be made to the willingness of the United States to provide massive assistance, especially under P. L. 480, during the difficult transition period following the overthrow of the present regime.

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2.

On the whole they believe that proposals advanced in the paper would be acceptable to the Revolutionary Council, the only specific deletion suggested being that of the first paragraph.

The paragraph entitled "Basic Policy Framework of the United States" was accepted without reservation.

(b) In the basic policy framework statement some specific mention should be made of the fact that the United States would not favor any commercial or other economic relations between Cuba and the Sino-Soviet powers.

(c) They felt that the statement should include a sentence calling specifically for the outlawing of the Communist Party.

(d) They would like to see stricken the reference on page 6 to the "Cuban Peace Corps", because it might be interpreted to call for sending young Cubans overseas.

(e) They point out that the Miami group, in approving the basic principles of the Constitution of 1940, specifically excluded the provision that the monthly salary of a teacher must not be less than a millionth part of the total budget (Article 52).

It would be desirable to state that considerable allocation of public funds be made for educational purposes. For example, the total educational expenditures made be at least 20 percent of the annual budget of the nation.

Sanchez Arango

Substantive Points:-

Discussion among Mr. Schlesinger, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Plank brought out a number of suggestions, qualifications, and elaborations. What might be done in Cuba, for example, to encourage the development of a free and responsible press and other communications media? There is no tradition of honest, independent journalism in Cuba, so that a call for a return to press practices of the past would not be desirable. Mr. Schlesinger believed, however, that it would be most useful to include a plea for a turn away from the "corruption of the past and the dictatorship of the present."

Mr. Schlesinger believed also that a statement about the desirability of a strong and responsible two-party system in Cuba could well be included. The difficulty here, of course, is that the old Cuban parties are largely discredited among the great bulk of the Cuban electorate, while factionalism among the competing anti-Castro groups may well give early rise to a multiplicity of "parties" gyrating around outstanding personalities, narrow ideological positions, and positions of presumed political leverage. We cannot encourage in Cuba today the perpetuation of a one-party or "no-party" system, nor can we encourage a multi-party system at a time when passions are running high and broadly based consensus is lacking. The suggestion was made that Dr. Mire might be prevailed upon to announce his desire to see a responsible opposition to him organize itself: this might make easier his task of meeting the attacks of his critics as he heads the provisional regime. Given the precarious and negative ties that unite the various anti-Castro factions today, however, it may be questioned whether support to divisive forces is wise.

As for the matter of elections in the short-term, the three agreed that conditions in Cuba within twelve months would not be such as to make a meaningful "good" election possible. We should not like to see a return to the old order in Cuba in which politicians delighted in playing a political game. Mr. Barnes believed, though, that with encouragement and experience at the local and provincial levels, the Cuban electorate could well be prepared to participate in national elections at the end of eighteen months after the change of regimes.

In the preliminary draft it is said that "owners who can make a legitimate claim will receive just and prompt compensation. . . ." The expression, "legitimate claim," needs to be clarified, perhaps through the use of examples. It could be noted, for instance, that those adjudged guilty of common crimes are not eligible for compensation, nor are those whose holdings could be adjudicated as unlawful under the Constitution of 1940.

On page 7, there is a short paragraph calling for the reestablishment of "constitutional guarantees." This paragraph should be expanded to include a strong condemnation of the perversion of justice and the judiciary function that characterizes the present Cuban regime. The paragraph might also take note of the tradition in Cuba of a strong and independent judiciary and the traditional presence in the country of a large number of highly competent lawyers; it might point to the important role foreseen for these men, both in the difficult transitional period and in the new post-Castro Cuban republic.

The paragraph beginning at the bottom of page 7 relating to the status of "intervened" enterprises needs to be expanded to make explicit that the shares to be sold "to the public" are to be sold in small enough denominations (perhaps in denominations as low as \$0.01, as in Japan and Canada) to permit Cubans in all income brackets to purchase them and that no individual is to be allowed to accumulate more than a small percentage (5 percent?) of the stock.

The reference on page 5 to the Danish Folk Schools needs to be either expanded or excluded. Mr. Plank's understanding of these schools is that they are exceptionally fine adult education centers that offer courses and provide facilities in almost all areas of cultural interest. Their closest equivalent in the United States, perhaps, is such institutions as the Cambridge Adult Education Center, although the Danish institutions are apparently more elaborate, draw upon larger local constituencies, and are substantially better financed.